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11 April 1952

DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77

Auth: DDA REG. 77/1763

Date: 21 MAR 1978 By: OTB

TO: Assistant Director  
Office of Collection and Dissemination

FROM: [REDACTED] Organization and Methods Examiner

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SUBJECT: Report on OPC and OSO, Combined, Area Top  
Secret Control Office.

1. PROBLEM: Review of operating methods of the Combined Area Top Secret Control Office, OPC and OSO, for the purpose of insuring compliance with basic Agency regulations and establishing uniform operating methods throughout CIA.

2. INCLUSIVE SURVEY DATES: 7-11 April 1952

a. OPC Area Top Secret Control Officer:  
OPC Deputy Top Secret Control Officer:  
OPC Alternate Top Secret Control Officer:  
All other personnel in the Area TSCO are alternates but the above are the supervisory personnel.

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b. OSO Area Top Secret Control Officer:  
OSO Deputy Top Secret Control Officer:  
OSO Alternate Top Secret Control Officer:  
All other personnel in the Area TSCO are alternates but the above are the supervisory personnel.

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c. At this writing announcement has not been made as to a readjustment of titles and duties of Area TSCO personnel in the merger of OPC and OSO control areas.

3. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM: Physical merger of the OPC and OSO Area Top Secret Control Offices was effectuated on 3 April 1952. The separate systems of control have continued to operate through 11 April 1952, while a jointly proposed control system for OPC and OSO has been under consideration. The examiner has been advised that the jointly developed system has been approved and will become effective on 14 April 1952.

The examiner has reviewed the OPC and OSO control systems currently in operation, and has discussed with both Areas the combined system due to go into effect. The findings of this report will be based on the assumption that the proposed new system will go into effect as anticipated and recommendations will be based on that assumption. The operating methods discussed below are used by both OPC and OSO unless otherwise stated.

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a. Obvious Departures from the Basic Agency System:

(1) A permanent charge-out card will be used in lieu of the standard CIA log form. A card will be prepared for each copy of a Top Secret document except in cases when all copies of the document are directed to one recipient. Each card lists (a) TS number, (b) Copy \* of \_\_\_\_ Pages, (c) Attachments, (d) routing, (e) space for signature of recipient, (f) date and time received. For internal distribution, this card will be hand-carried with the document by an Area TSCO courier to the recipient and signature obtained immediately. While the card is out of file, its place will be marked by a stop-card to flag its absence. The card will be supplemented by a document receipt when a document moves outside the Area. The cards will be filed numerically.

(2) An abstract file slip is prepared in triplicate by an analyst listing (a) source, (b) date of document, (c) TS number, (d) material (memo, report, etc.), (e) From, (f) To, (g) Subject, (h) copies, (i) pages, (j) attachments, (k) enclosures, (l) document number. One copy is filed with the numerical charge-out cards described above, and one copy is filed by subject (case number) in the Secret files in the main file room. OPC files one copy by source in its Secret files, and OSO files one copy by source in its Numbering Unit.

(3) OSO analysts prepare a Referral Slip listing the source, subject, TS number, which is filed by subject (case number) in the Secret files to flag that a TS document on this subject is in the files.

(4) OSO prepares a card for each personality listed in any TS document and files these cards alphabetically with cross-reference to TS number, case number, and field office symbol.

(5) OPC has been using a special cover sheet for internal distribution since the standard cover sheet was considered inadequate due to lack of space for remarks. These special sheets were on occasion inadvertently left on documents leaving the Area and/or the standard cover sheet was incomplete as to internal movement within OPC. The Central TS Control Officer devised a revised standard cover sheet which has been approved by OPC who have agreed to discontinue use of the special cover sheet as soon as the revised standard form is made available.

(6) OSO has designated assistants in approximately 14 control points for internal control of documents. OPC has designated certain personnel to receive and control documents in approximately 25 control

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points for internal distribution. However, these OPC personnel are not designated "Assistant TSCO" because of the wording of CIA Regulation [REDACTED] which implies that Assistants can receive and disseminate documents anywhere within CIA, thus endangering the Area control system.

(7) Document files are in theory centralized, except that individual offices are permitted to maintain files on projects while active. In many instances, however, these offices continue to hold files on inactive or completed projects.

(8) Certain material requiring special clearances for personnel handling are delivered direct to one designated official and his secretary. The standard charge-out card and abstract slip are prepared and forwarded to the Area TSCO to complete the records.

b. Security Hazards:

(1) In general, security controls are rigidly exercised in OPC and OSO. One weakness, however, is the absence of a log to the Central Top Secret Control Office. Thus, there is no systematic follow-up at one central point on items transmitted to or from OPC or OSO and other CIA Areas. The danger is lessened considerably, of course, by follow-up on receipts for documents, but OPC and OSO lack the double assurance enjoyed by other Areas which are assisted by Central TSCO follow-up.

(2) Hand-carrying of documents by officials without recourse to Area channels is a security hazard for OPC and OSO in common with other CIA Areas. It is probably a more acute problem in OSO because the nature of the operation tends toward extreme secrecy even within the Area.

(3) A security problem that is especially acute in OSO is the return of documents to the Area when an individual departs for the field. In most cases these individuals circulate through various offices and training programs during departmental tenure and it is extremely difficult to centralize at one point a list of all classified items which have been issued to him.

(4) OPC took an inventory in January 1951 of 50,000 TS documents from the inception of CIA to that date. Of the 1,015 items not located, 75 per cent were prior to 1949. About 900 of the 1,015 items remain unaccounted for at present. OSO has never taken an inventory of its files which also include OS files. About 200,000 items would be included in an inventory.

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c. Unique Problems:

(1) OPC and OSO Area Office has the unique problem of handling extremely secret items which must remain entirely confidential to OPC and OSO. This need for extreme security limits the amount of information to appear on any control records, limits the number of persons to handle such items, limits the amount of control assistance that can be rendered by central control offices, and necessitates delivery of material from outside agencies direct to the Area.

(2) Certain materials are so sensitive that only two persons in OPC (not in the Area TSCO) can receive them. Thus, the Area Office must depend on the above individuals to furnish such control records as are maintained.

d. General Problems:

(1) Over-classification is such an acute problem that OPC approximately three months ago, designated the Area TSCO to review documents bearing a TS classification and submit a bi-weekly report to the AD/PC on obvious overclassifications. In almost all cases down-grading has resulted.

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4. CONCLUSIONS:

Personnel of both OPC and OSO were cooperative and courteous in assisting the examiner to review the control systems. Due to the fact that merger of the two systems was taking place at the time of review, it was difficult to obtain a valid picture of the operations as they now exist and as they will emerge. It is suggested that a member of the CIA Top Secret Control Office should visit this operation briefly about May 15 to verify this examiner's findings and lend any assistance needed at that time.

Personnel of the merged control offices are alert and well-trained, and the examiner believes that the merger has created no major problems of cooperation and morale.

The control system is considered excellent for any Area having a considerable volume of TS material to be controlled and disseminated internally, but would not be justified for a small operation. The combined OPC-OSO Area processes an estimated 400 documents per week (this figure does not include the number of copies of each document processed). Area personnel

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believe that this volume could be reduced to a great extent by a sound system controlling overclassification.

After the merger of the OPC - OSO Area Offices has been completed, the examiner believes that a saving of personnel can be effected, particularly since OSO's control system will be considerably streamlined by the new control system.

5. ACTION RECOMMENDED:

a. OSO's Referral slip mentioned in 3.a.(3), above, should be abolished when inter-filing of Top Secret and Secret material has been effectuated.

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c. The examiner has recommended in a previous report that Regulation [REDACTED] should be revised to limit Assistants to receiving and transmitting documents only within their immediate Area. This contention is further supported by OPC (see 3.a.(6), above.

d. Controls should be tightened to insure that inactive and/or completed project files are returned to the Area central files for safekeeping.

e. A weekly log should be sent to Central Top Secret Control listing all document which move into or out of OPC or OSO from other CIA Areas. These documents will be listed on the log of the Area transmitting or receiving, and will be, therefore, the subject of an incomplected transaction on the records of CTSC.

f. As regards documents which move directly into OPC or OSO from outside agencies and are only disseminated internally, the examiner believes the special arrangement now existent to be satisfactory. It does, however, emphasize the necessity for periodic inventory of documents within OPC and OSO. Since a complete inventory of past documents seems impossible of accomplishment, it is recommended that OPC and OSO should conduct an inventory immediately of all documents from 1 January 1952, and conduct inventories at quarterly intervals thereafter. The examiner believes that the nature of OPC and OSO operations makes it more imperative for these offices to conduct frequent inventories than any other Areas visited to date.

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g. The success in OPC of objective review of documents which appear to be overclassified appears to support the examiner's recommendation in a previous report that qualified persons review all TS and Secret documents to determine the validity of the classification. OPC's review is limited to obvious cases only and is performed by a person who has not been specifically trained to judge classifications. Therefore, if review is systematic and performed by fully trained personnel, it should reduce the number of Top Secret documents materially - the examiner considers 50 per cent a conservative estimate.

h. It is suggested that Area Offices located in Buildings I, J, K, L, Qtrs. Eye, [REDACTED] should be advised that they may make use of OPC's periodic destruction trips to "M" Building by calling OPC Area TSCO to make arrangements. 25X1A9a

i. It is suggested that a representative of the CIA TSCO should visit the OPC-OSO Area in approximately one month to review the merger control system and lend any assistance required.

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CONCURRENCES:

[REDACTED]  
CIA Top Secret Control Officer

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W. L. Peel  
Chief, Organization and Methods Service